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Slavomír Michálek and Michal Štefanský

Age of Fear

The Cold War and Its Influence on Czechoslovakia 1945–1968

ibidem

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Introduction

The shock waves of the Second World War were still reverberating when the Cold War began. Two of the war's victorious Allied powers—the United States of America and the Soviet Union—soon after commenced to compete against each other for spheres of influence, including with regard to the composition of the coalition governments in Poland and Yugoslavia, international security via the United Nations, and control of Germany's occupation zones etc. Although their differences were still in formation, disputes between the USA and the Soviet Union were kept hidden from public view in the hope that they could be overcome and that the wartime cooperation of the Big Three Allies (the USA, Soviet Union, and Great Britain) would carry over into the post-war period. However, Franklin Roosevelt's belief that it was possible to come to an agreement with "good uncle Joe" (Joseph Stalin), because the Soviet Union was entitled to having its security demands in Europe and Asia met, quickly dissipated when Harry Truman's administration came into power in the US.

Soviet ideas regarding the post-war arrangement of continental Europe and Asia were clearly outlined in the treatises of the leading Soviet diplomats and politicians, Ivan Maisky and Maxim Litvinov, who addressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the war was over. From the treatises of Maisky and Litvinov it was apparent that the Soviet sphere of interest, even before June 1941, included new regions in the north, west, and south of the Soviet border. The Soviet Union's intention was to extend its influence into Central Asia and, to the detriment of Japan, into the Far East via division of the region into occupation zones similar to Germany's, among other methods. However, post-war development did not follow the course set out in Maisky and Litvinov's original analyses. There were several reasons for this, both internal and external, but one was particularly crucial and decisive: Stalin's foreign policy was cobbled together without defined short-term goals, creating a Soviet bloc with the regimes as we know them from the late 1940s.

Roosevelt's policy in relation to the Soviet Union was criticized by George F. Kennan, US diplomacy's long-term expert and a recognised authority on the Soviet reality, who disclosed the nature of the Soviet policy and ideology as a threat to the world as early as 1945. According to Kennan, an "architect of the definition of the Cold War", Moscow fed off of a feeling of insecurity to justify its aggressive steps, and only understood the arguments of power. Kennan's opinion was reflected in US policy throughout the course of the Cold War.

Until 1944, the United States had shown little interest in the post-war fate of Central and Eastern Europe, because it assumed the regions would fall under the British sphere of interest. But in post-war arrangements, Britain did not succeed in putting into practice its plans to create federations or confederations in Central and Eastern Europe. Britain's main obstruction was the refusal of the Soviet Union, which considered such action a hindrance to Soviet westward political penetration in the wake of Germany's defeat. The Soviets' categorical "no" to federations thus buried any plans for a "Third Europe", which would have seen Poland play a key role in Central-Eastern Europe. For the same reasons, an earlier plan to establish a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, and a later plan for a Balkan federation, also had no hope for success. When the confederation plan fell through, Czechoslovakia's president-in-exile, Edvard Beneš, sought a solution in signing the *Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post War Cooperation* with the Soviet Union in December 1943, which predetermined Czechoslovakia's future course. The further signing of treaties between small countries and the superpowers was to be prevented by the principle of "self-limitation", so that alliance treaties could not create post-war spheres of influence and control. The USSR abandoned this principle shortly after the War, which meant that its own alliance treaties with countries ruled by "People's Democracy" regimes, as well as mutual treaties between such countries, were in fact constructing the Soviet bloc.

The formation of two antagonistic blocs headed by the United States and the Soviet Union was, from the very beginning, marked

by disputes and confrontations in the political, military, economic, and ideological realms. Such developments were sped-up by the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and NATO on one hand, and Soviet ideological and political expansion into Central and Eastern Europe, the establishment of Cominform, and Communist's seizing power in states adhering to the concept of People's Democracy, on the other. People's Democracies thus ceased to be led by centrist-leftist coalition governments; a monopoly on power was acquired by the Communists, who considered the People's Democracy concept a form of dictatorship over the proletariat. The Prague Communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 buried the ideas of domestic non-Communist politicians for a "Czechoslovak road of development" and of Czechoslovakia serving as a "bridge" between the east and the west.

The first Berlin crisis in 1948-1949, and especially the Korean War in the early 1950s, transformed the Cold War through militarization. Military force came to be considered to have the greatest impact in the decision-making and relations between the superpowers and their satellites. Militarization was accompanied by a drastic increase in arms spending and the construction of large and modern armies in possession of nuclear weapons. The development of a robust weaponry production in Czechoslovakia, which drew on traditions of the past, fulfilled several important goals. Besides supplying and modernizing weapons for the needs of its' own army and those of other People's Democracies, Czechoslovak weapon-making factories also supplied the armies of several developing countries. The Soviet Union utilized Czechoslovakia's already well-established interwar relations with countries of the near and Middle East and countries in Latin America to assert influence and control. A significant supply of Czechoslovak and Soviet weapons to Egypt in 1955 shifted the balance of military forces in relation to Israel and, with the substantial assistance of Czechoslovak weapons, Cuba deflected military invasion at the Bay of Pigs in April 1962.

Stalin's "invariable" disputes between the powers, since the establishment of the occupation zones in 1945, became a question for the Germans, especially after the formation of two German states. Conflicts related to the access of western countries into West Berlin caused two major crises which threatened to grow into a military conflict between the bloc powers. Various plans to unify Germany prior to 1990 failed due to the rejection of free elections in the whole of Germany, on the basis of which an all-German democratic government could have been formed. In other words, free elections would have put an end to the German Democratic Republic, meaning that they could only take place after the close of the Cold War.

Conflicts within the Soviet bloc were present from its origins at the end of the 1940s. These internal conflicts became a part of the Cold War because both superpowers used them to ideologically attack the other, as a means of politically and economically disparaging the enemy, and via mutual accusations of interference in internal affairs. This was true in relation to the Polish October crisis and the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, as well as the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968. A comprehensive documents-based analysis of the internal Soviet bloc conflict, with regard to the events in Czechoslovakia, disproves the frequently cited opinion that the United States approved of the military intervention into Czechoslovakia in 1968, referring to the 1945 Yalta agreements concerning the division of spheres of influence in Europe as evidence. The USA, moreover, has categorically denied any agreement, in oral or written form, regarding their approval of military intervention. Washington assessed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia as an internal affair of the Eastern Bloc and refused to get involved.

The Vietnam War from 1964 to 1975 was the longest proxy war during the Cold War period. The People's Republic of China was involved in Vietnam as an important nuclear superpower. Each of the superpowers carried out their own policy toward the fighting parties in Vietnam. Unique to the Vietnam War was that it saw the intervention of two Communist superpowers, which considered each other as an enemy, and each strove for the other to cede the provision of aid. China's representatives proclaimed that Vietnam

belonged to its sphere of influence and that the Soviet Union should focus on Europe. The USSR naturally, unequivocally rejected this view. Czechoslovakia, standing in the Vietnam conflict firmly on Moscow's side, provided generous economic and military aid to the Vietnam Democratic Republic in the form of donations and long-term credit. Interestingly, the Vietnam War did not worsen relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, since both superpowers, by means of a joint détente, strove to end the war and establish joint treaties concerning disarmament and the de-escalation of international tension.

This book is the work of two historians, which originated over the course of several years. In writing it, the authors availed themselves of their long-standing research on the Cold War era, Czechoslovakia-US relations and other critically relevant issues, as well as published works pertaining to the period in question. This monograph was conceived of as a blend of historical analysis of the superpowers' policies, with the contextual impact thereof on Czechoslovakia and its position within the Soviet bloc. This unorthodox historical vantage point, a view of the domestic situation from "outside", so to speak, especially coming from Slovak historians, is unique in the historiography of Slovakia and, in the opinion of both authors, is also professionally daring. Brazenly, however, we permit ourselves to believe that this work, drawing on extensive source materials of Slovak, Czech, American, and Russian provenance, will provide a more comprehensive view that will undoubtedly enrich our collective knowledge of the Cold War, which stood as the foundation of international, European, and Czecho-Slovak history in the second half of the twentieth century.

Slavomír Michálek
Michal Štefanský

Chapter I
The Birth of the Cold War

1. The Superpowers' Notions of the Postwar Arrangement of Europe and the World

As the end of World War II drew near, the post-war borders of Europe and the world began to acquire a sharper outline in the treaties and notions of the anti-Hitler coalition states, as did the structure of the superpowers' spheres of control and influence over, as-a-rule, smaller states. Central-Eastern Europe became the domain of the USSR.[1] The introduction of the Soviet army into the territory of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in 1944 initiated a new dimension into the creation of the Soviet sphere of influence and control. Following the Soviet army's entry into the territory of Czechoslovakia, the relationship between the administration of the liberated territory and the Soviet command was defined via a treaty signed on May 8, 1944 between the governments of the Czechoslovak Republic (CSR) and USSR. The first article of the treaty stated that the Soviet commander-in-chief possessed the highest authority in the buffer zone, which consisted of the first 70 km of territory from the front line. Czechoslovak government authorities located within this area were to maintain contact with the Soviet command via a government delegate. Jurisdiction in the buffer zone belonged to the Soviet commander-in-chief. The execution of Soviet jurisdiction in the 70 km area behind the front line enabled the authorities of the Soviet NKVD (the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the approximate equivalent of a ministry of the interior, which until 1946 also fulfilled the role of the secret state-security police) and SMERSH (a special department within the NKVD to confront internal threats) to intervene against the civil population. In 1944-1945, the authorities of these units forcibly removed several thousand citizens from Slovakia and placed them into Soviet labour camps (Gu-

1 Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace. The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State 1945–1948* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 28 et seq.

lags). The number of expatriated citizens ranged between 5,000 and 20,000 persons. The greatest number of deported people came from the southern regions occupied by Hungary and villages with an originally German population, as well as from representatives of Hlinka's *Slovak People's Party*, with its sub-divisions—the Hlinka Guard and Hlinka Youth—and officials from German and Hungarian political parties. The internment of citizens from the territories of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia was based on a resolution of the USSR State Defence Committee of December 16, 1944, prepared by Lavrentiy Beria and approved by Stalin. The resolution ordered that all Germans capable of work found within the liberated territories of these countries were to be interned and transported to designated sites within the USSR by February 15, 1945. The internment also applied to citizens of Hungary in the occupied territories and Germans with Slovak citizenships. The resolution tasked Marshal Malinovsky and General Petrov, commanders of the 2nd and 4th Ukrainian Fronts, with ensuring its execution and, in cooperation with the NKVD, with the transportation of internees into collection camps.[2]

The lion's share of the liberation of Czechoslovakia from Nazi rule was borne by the armies of the two superpowers, the USSR and the USA. The USA remained in CSR territory following the end of World War II on May 8 and the liberation of Prague by the Red Army on May 9. In April and May, the American army progressed into western Bohemia to the demarcation line of Karlovy Vary, Pilsen, České Budějovice with the strength of approximately 50,000 soldiers.[3] After a partial withdrawal, two divisions remained of about 30,000 soldiers. The departure of the American and Soviet armies from Czechoslovakia took place on December 1, 1945, on the basis of a US-Soviet treaty from early November 1945. US President Harry Truman suggested to Stalin that both of the superpowers pull their armies out of Czechoslovakia. Stalin agreed to Truman's

2 *Sovetskiy faktor v Vostochnoy Yevrope 1944-1953*. Tom I. (Moskva, 1999), 116–119.

3 Justine Faure, *Americký přítel. Československo v hře americké diplomacie 1933–1968* (Praha: Nakl. Lidové noviny, 2005), 42.

proposal and, as of December 1, only wounded Soviet soldiers and the guard service remained within CSR territory. The American army withdrew all of their soldiers.[4] This treaty between the superpowers was to be a persuasive argument as regards the possibility of an agreement between them and also that Czechoslovakia could be an open sphere of influence within Central-Eastern Europe.

The victorious superpowers — the Big Three — consisting of the Soviet Union, United States of America and Great Britain, had already, during the course of the war, held joint talks regarding an overall post-war arrangement. Especially important were the negotiations in Yalta in the Crimea (February-March 1945). The Allies agreed that they would support the creation of coalition governments composed of domestic and exile resistance forces representing the whole political spectrum, that is, not only leftist or central-leftist movements but also civil parties which tended more towards the right of the political spectrum. In Poland and Yugoslavia, the western superpowers intervened so that representatives of the western exile partisan movements (Stanisław Mykołajczyk and Ivan Šubašić) could get into government. Nevertheless, the USSR was already beginning to back out of the principle of support for coalition parties in the years 1946-1947, and in the countries within its sphere of interest it supported only the communists. The composition of the coalition governments in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland, which deviated from the Yalta agreements, became the first bone of contention and a source of tension between the USSR and western states, especially the USA.

The perception of post-war Central-Eastern Europe had been shaped already during the war. The representatives of the Big Three agreed to the renewal of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Austria, and Albania, and appraised their post-war borders at conferences in Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam and during bilateral negotiations. But it proved most difficult to reach a consensus on the issue of Poland's eastern and western borders, especially between

4 Walter Ullmann, *The United States in Prague 1945–1948* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 90–105.

the Soviet Union and the Polish exile government as well as the partisan movement. At the beginning of World War II, perceptions and projects had been born of the creation of large territorial units in the space between the Baltic and the Aegean Seas through the creation of two federations or confederations: the "north" composed of the states of Central Europe; and the "south" comprising the states of South-Eastern Europe. These federations would have occupied the space between Germany and the Soviet Union. They were to represent a grouping of states over which neither the Soviet Union nor Germany would have control.[5]

Since Czechoslovakia, as part of Central-Eastern Europe, fell within the Soviet sphere of influence, we must dedicate some attention to the genesis of the Soviet policy towards this region during the period of World War II and shortly after. Upon entering the war, the Soviet Union considered as its primary war goal the renewal of its western border prior to June 1941, that is, the border after the annexation of the Baltic republics and Bessarabia. The Soviet border with Poland remained an open question. From December 1941 until May 1942, Soviet-British talks regarding an alliance treaty were underway. Moscow demanded of the British that the treaty stabilize the western Soviet border and include the right to establish military bases in Finland and Romania following the war.[6] During the war, the Soviets hid their intentions for Central-Eastern Europe from their western allies and they did not consider it necessary to negotiate with them on this issue.[7] There were two exceptions however: 1) the position on Czechoslovak-Polish federation plans from 1942 and towards federations generally; 2) the position with regard to the conclusion of alliance treaties between the Soviet Union and Great Britain with allied exile governments, the validity of which would extend beyond the war.

5 Kenneth W. Thompson, *Cold War Theories, World Polarization 1943–1953* (Louisiana State UP, 1991), 91.

6 Yurij L. Gibiansky, Problemy Vostochnoy Yevropy i nachalo formirovania sovietskogo bloka. In *Kholodnaya voyna* (Moskva: Olma-Press, 2003), 105.

7 Ibid., 108.

Great Britain supported the concept of federations or confederations. Proposals for a federative arrangement between Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe first originated in the research centre of the British Foreign Office in 1941-1942. The conceptions of federations also had their origins and advocates in the exiled governments of Poland and Yugoslavia, which were located in London. The British attitude toward and support of the exile governments in the question of the creation of federations was rooted in the idea that, due to Austria-Hungary's dissolution after World War I, a power vacuum had been created in the region of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and, as a consequence of nationalist disputes and border quarrels, the successor states were unstable. A solution to such instability and a means of overcoming disputes concerning the position of individual ethnic groups and the location of borders was to be provided through greater territorial units—federations or confederations—in the territory between Germany and the Soviet Union. Stalin initially agreed with the British proposal for federations but then, when the Soviets failed to smuggle a formulation regarding the British approval of the western Soviet border into the British-Soviet treaty, the Soviet standpoint in principle changed.

The plan for a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, elaborated by Edward Raczyński and Hubert Ripka, contained stipulations that the confederation would have joint foreign, defence, economic, financial, social, and transport policies and a customs union. The intention of the Polish exiles to include Lithuania after the war, however, met strong Soviet rejection. Besides, the ideas of the Polish exiles that Vilnius in Lithuania and Lvov in the Ukraine should belong to a renewed Poland did not promise much hope for the creation of a confederation. A negative attitude toward the Balkan federation demonstrated that the Soviet Union refused in principle the idea of confederations and unions, because it considered their creation "an obstacle to the USSR's influence in its penetration into the West, especially in the wake of Germany's defeat".[8] At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers of the USA, USSR and Great Brit-

8 Ibid., 109.

ain in October 1943, the Soviet Union categorically expressed its opposition to federations and the contemplation of this question at all, because the federation projects reminded the Soviets of the interwar policy of the *cordon sanitaire*. However, it was not possible to execute the British plans for a federative or confederative future of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe without Soviet approval and American support. When Stalin rejected the idea of a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, exiled president Edvard Beneš made an effort to sign a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union which was to be open to the accession of Poland.[9] But Soviet disputes with the Polish exiled government and further problems in Soviet-Polish relations prevented the conclusion of such a treaty. The USSR's categorical resistance against federations thus basically buried British plans for a "third Europe" with a critical role played by Poland. With its rejection of federations and confederations, the Soviet Union had in mind, and then eventually achieved its goal, to prevent a future situation in which it might have a potential adversary in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe that could thwart its ambitions to bring the region within its own sphere of influence over individual states. In 1943, the Soviet government discontinued contact with the Polish government to protest against the investigation of the murders of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk.

In June 1942, the British Foreign Office recommended that its Soviet partner adopt a treaty on the basis of "self-denying ordinance" which would prohibit the conclusion of treaties with small states until a peace conference following the conclusion of the war, with validity also in the post-war period. In the opposite case, British-Soviet competition could occur in relation to alliance treaties.[10] This principle came into action in relation to preparations of the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance treaty, the signing of which Edvard Beneš strove for during his visit to Moscow in 1943. In connection with the preparation of the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty, the Soviet

9 Detlef Brandes, *Exil v Londýně 1939-1943* (Praha, 2003), 437.

10 Ibid., 225.

Union argued that, as regards the issue of the "self-denying ordinance", it had viewed the British ministry's recommendation as only an exchange of opinions, because the British had not elaborated on the definitive wording of the text. Finally, the British Foreign Secretary acknowledged that the Soviet Union had a right to exception from this principle because the USSR had no other potential contractual partners, whereas Great Britain could conclude other alliance treaties.[11] The self-denying ordinance was intended to prevent the creation of spheres of control and influence in the post-war period on the basis of long-term alliance treaties concluded during the time of war. The Czechoslovak-Soviet *Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance, and Post-war Cooperation* of December 12, 1943 deviated from this principle. Article 5 of this treaty stated that the contractual parties would not enter into any association or coalition directed against the other party. This article was drawn from what Stalin used in relation to the rejection of the Marshall Plan, when he reminded the Czechoslovak delegation of the issue "*druzhba*" (friendship) with the USSR and unequivocally demanded that Prague withdraw its participation. Additionally, the Soviet Union used Article 5 when vetoing the Czechoslovak-French treaty, which was prepared for conclusion in the post-war period.

The USA's attitude towards the division of spheres of influence in Europe was negative. The Americans criticized the British imperial policy on the renewal of imperial governance. The American President Franklin D. Roosevelt's ideas of post-war world order were that the three victorious states (USA, USSR, Great Britain) and China were to promote peace against aggression in the form of an administrative council. The four world "policemen" were to protect the world from future war. From the viewpoint of American policy, the expansion of bilateral relations had no hope of success, because the US policy promoted international post-war security by means of a world-wide organization (the United Nations). Prior to 1944, the USA had little interest in the fate of Central-Eastern Europe. This traditional American indifference had been reinforced

11 Ibid., 381.

during World War II by the belief that this region would belong within Great Britain's sphere of interest. At the end of 1944, the US State Department arrived at the conclusion that the USSR was going to be a dominant power east of the Berlin-Trieste line.[12] In relation to the Soviet influence in Central-Eastern Europe, in 1945, the USA allowed two possible directions of development: one of them following the Baltic model, that is Moscow's dominance over all regions, possibly by joining them to the Soviet Union; and the other according to the Czechoslovak model, rooted in free decision-making on domestic issues and the fostering of economic relations with the west. In their foreign policy, the countries would thoroughly abide by the imperatives of Soviet national security.[13] This model would have resulted in the region of Central-Eastern Europe becoming an open sphere of influence. Two leading American diplomats, Averell Harriman and Charles Bohlen, championed the idea that the Soviet sphere should be open, with the preservation of a market economy and the existence of several political parties. In foreign policy, there should be no hostility in relation to the USSR but, at the same time, there should be the option of openly cooperating with the west and the USA. On the contrary, a closed sphere of influence would result in the Soviet system with the abolition of private ownership, nationalization, collectivization, and the rule of a single party, and in foreign policy, total subjugation to the USSR.[14] The decisive conditions for the transformation of Central-Eastern Europe exclusively into the Soviet sphere of influence acquired its final shape following the end of the war as a result of the turnaround which had occurred between the USA and the USSR, from one-time cooperation to pointed and militarized confrontation.

One of the first "arenas" which reflected the increasingly complicated relationship between the USSR and the USA at the end of the war, regarding post-war development, was the UNCIO confer-

12 Faure, 26.

13 Ibid.

14 Jan Eichler, Intermezzo: Edvard Beneš a Charles de Gaulle – problém politického vůdcovství. In Jan Němeček et al., *Československo-sovětská smlouva 1943* (Praha: Historický ústav, 2014), 124–125.

ence in San Francisco in April-June 1945. One of the trends, which for a while threatened to cause the greatest problems in San Francisco, was the critical attitude towards the Soviet Union. The issue of future relations between the USSR and the other 47 states was a topic of both official and unofficial negotiations. It was assumed that the important questions between the Big Three had already been answered at Yalta. But the San Francisco conference began two months later, in an atmosphere of renewed suspicion concerning Soviet imperial demands in Europe and Asia. The end of the war in Europe was partly the cause of this. The defeat of Germany, and the fact that Moscow's military aid was no longer needed, meant that many people in the west, who during the war had kept their anti-Soviet attitudes in check, felt that the time had come to limit the expansiveness of the Kremlin on the European continent; or, as was often said away from the table at the San Francisco conference, to make the Allies' policy towards the USSR "more hard-line".

As the conference progressed, the compromises of the daily negotiations contributed a great deal to a decrease of fear and suspicion, on both sides, which had overshadowed initial meetings. On the one hand, the west better understood the nature of Soviet interest in establishing a warranty against the renewal of German aggression; on the other hand, the Soviets could closely observe how their unilateral steps impacted upon other countries. The democratic world was determined to create an efficient system of collective security with the USSR, not against it as Moscow so often feared.[15]

We have already mentioned that the United States of America lacked a clear and purposeful policy towards Central-Eastern Europe for a long time. The cause was that, during the war years, the USA had been reluctant to accept any obligations in terms of "local" issues pertaining to the post-war arrangement. This fact was related both to the pre-war tradition of isolationism and to the idea that

15 Slavomír Michálek, *San Francisco 1945. Vznik Organizácie Spojených národov* (Bratislava: Veda, 2015), 54.

obligations were not to be taken on sooner than after the end of the war, when the US would find itself at the peak of its power.

After World War II, Czechoslovakia might have become a testing lab of the execution of the open sphere of influence model. The main way in which the USA wanted to promote its own idea of an open sphere of influence was to prevent the economic dependence of Central-Eastern Europe on the USSR. The open-sphere policy was connected with Roosevelt and George Kennan criticized it, pointing to the fact that continuing with Roosevelt's policy in the post-war period was based on mistaken assumptions and dangerous illusions, and was lacking knowledge of the essence of Soviet policy.[16] Kennan held a contrary opinion and demanded that the USA stop engaging itself in the Soviet sphere of influence and avoid possible confrontation. In Kennan's view, the USA should respect the division of two spheres of influence and consider it as a fait accompli. Kennan had arrived at this view during the time of the Yalta Conference of the three superpowers in February 1945. A year later, in February 1946, Kennan (at that time a minister-counsellor to the US ambassador in Moscow) sent Washington the legendary "Long Telegram" in which he analyzed Soviet policy in detail. In it, he asserted that Moscow needed a sense of insecurity in order to justify its dictatorship and sweep away any American attempt at peace. In Kennan's opinion, the Soviet leadership only understood the arguments of power. If their adversary had enough force and made it clear that they would use it, it would have a discouraging effect on the Soviet representatives. Kennan's telegram was based on knowledge of Russian history and it stated that Lenin and Stalin were a greater threat to the world than the Russian tsars because their policy additionally contained the fanaticism of a new faith in the form of Marxist dogma.[17] However, Kennan's telegram warning did not result in an immediate change of US policy in Central-Eastern Europe. The situation was, though, different as regards the

16 George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), 170 et seq.

17 Karel Durman, *Popely ještě žhavé... I. Válka a nukleární mír* (Praha: Karolinum, 2004), 169-170.

resistance to Soviet pressure in Iran, Turkey, and Greece, where the USA did not plan to leave this area to traditional British influence.

The Soviets reacted to Kennan's telegram by elaborating their own "long telegram", compiled by the Soviet ambassador to Washington, Nikolai Novikov in September 1946. Novikov pointed to the danger of possible American world dominance in economic and military areas. The Soviet ambassador to Washington strove to depict American foreign policy to his superiors in Moscow and, he did so, in a similar fashion as Kennan had for the State Department back in February of the same year. Novikov characterized US foreign policy as imperialistic, one that was heading toward world dominance. Allegedly, this was also the opinion that prevailed in American government circles with the argument of the right to rule, and all efforts were subject to it. Novikov's telegram emphasized the fact that American post-war policy differed from its pre-war policy, because at that time the USA had relied on avoiding participation in the war hoping that its main competitors would exhaust themselves and that the USA would thus acquire the position of the most powerful country in the world. The situation would also have been suitable for supplying consumer goods to Europe and, together with goods, to also export capital and influence which would strengthen the economic position of the USA in the world.

According to Novikov, the USA was mistaken in believing that the Soviet Union would be so weakened after the war so as to request economic aid from the USA. If that had happened, the USA would have extended its influence into Europe and Asia without the USSR being able to prevent it from doing so. Despite all the economic losses, the USSR remained independent from the rest of the world and its international position was now more solid than before the war. Soviet armies were now stationed in previously adversary countries and the USSR enjoyed an important position in the states of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which represented an obstacle to US expansionism.

In the following portion of the telegram, the Soviet ambassador pointed to the US effort to acquire a dominant position in the world by building naval and air bases outside of its own territory.

He described American expenses on armament and the construction of bases and countries in which new bases would potentially be located. US armed forces played a decisive role in ensuring world dominance. Novikov also analyzed the mutual compromises between the USA and Great Britain and the division of spheres of influence in Asia. The USA and Great Britain had not agreed yet with respect to the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern regions because US interests focused especially on the oil in these areas.[18]

In the last part of his telegram, Novikov insisted that the hard-line policy against the USSR declared by Roosevelt's advisor, James F. Byrnes, represented the main hindrance to cooperation between the superpowers. Novikov pointed to the USA as the obstacle to the democratization process in Europe due to the penetration of American capital. This policy was intended to undermine the democratic government's friendliness towards the USSR. The USA, in Novikov's words, was also trying to limit the USSR's influence in Germany. Also the American occupation policy was not effective in eliminating remnants of Nazism and rebuilding Germany on a democratic basis. He described the US policy in Germany as anti-Soviet.[19]

When analyzing the strategy of containment, it is necessary to also mention Kennan's article *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*[20] published in summer 1947 in Foreign Affairs magazine under the pseudonym "X". In this article, Kennan explained that he was expecting Soviet pressure against free institutions in the world, which had to be agilely and vehemently contained in such a way as to preserve balance in the international political system. In this context, Kennan spoke about five centres of world industry. At the same time, he listed the regions which must not fall within the Soviet sphere (the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Far East). Kennan's article for-

18 Silvia Osuská, George F. Kennan a stratégia zadržiavania, manuscript study, The author provides an online source: www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/02/documents/novikov/

19 Ibid., 42.

20 Kennan's telegram and the "X" article have been well known since they were published. Novikov's telegram only became public following the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

mulated a new foreign policy for the USA: a concept departing from isolationism towards interventionism and globalism.

The original ambition of Czechoslovakia's political leaders after the end of World War II was one of standing "on the threshold of two worlds" and of serving as a bridge between the west and the east. President Edvard Beneš and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Masaryk, were particular advocates of this geopolitical conception. But the notion of the "bridge" only had a hope provided that the war-time coalition between the USSR and the USA was preserved. Post-1945 developments, however, took a different turn and the coalition alliance of the two superpowers from war-time was falling apart. The Soviets' ideological expansion into Central-Eastern Europe was interpreted in the USA as a direct expansion of the USSR's power, thus it established a strategy of containing communism within its borders. The policy of confrontation between the superpowers known as the Cold War gradually buried Czechoslovakia's hopes of becoming a political-strategic bridge.

Czechoslovak foreign policy from the end of the war until the beginning of 1948 can be divided into several short time periods. The first of these was an immediate development in the CSR at the end of the war, where the main role of the state consisted in rebuilding the country's economy which had been damaged and devastated by the war. The USA helped Czechoslovakia (as it did other allied countries) within the UNRRA and through the Lend-Lease Act. Although mutual Czechoslovak-American relations were complicated by the issue of compensation for nationalized and confiscated US property within Czechoslovak territory, between May 1945 and spring 1949 Czechoslovakia received material help from UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) to the value of USD 264,000,000. At the end of the war, Czechoslovakia received military material to the value of USD 2,700,000 via the Lend-Lease Act, and in spring 1946 another loan of USD 20,000,000 for the purchase of American cotton. Although Czechoslovakia was one of the founding states of the peace-promoting United Nations organization in summer 1945, already by October 1945 it had signed a so-called Uranium Treaty with the Soviet Union, pursuant

to which 90% of mined Czechoslovak uranium was to be exported to the USSR. In September 1946, the Czechoslovak delegate (Vavro Hajdů) at the Paris Peace Conference, enthusiastically applauded the speech of the Soviet representative, Andrey Vyshinsky, who spoke about the enslavement of European nations with dollar alms. He accused the USA of practising "economic imperialism", seeking to buy control over the region with its money.[21] This seemingly unimportant episode might also be called "the most expensive applause in history". US State Secretary, James F. Byrnes, responded by ordering the discontinuance of Prague's drawing of a USD 50,000,000 credit for the purchase of military surplus from the US army and put a stop to hopeful negotiations regarding a reconstruction loan in dollars which caused great financial losses to Czechoslovakia. The US administration's reasoning was based on the opinion that it could not support a country which held an opposing view of US economic aid. A source of permanent disagreement in Czechoslovak-American relations was Czechoslovakia's unwillingness to resolve indemnification for US confiscated and nationalized property.[22] As a positive step in mutual relations, we may consider the signing of the Czechoslovak-US declaration on trade policy of November 8, 1946, the most important article from which was a reciprocal granting of the MFN (most favoured nation) clause.[23] After 1947, Czechoslovak-American relations became further complicated due to the USA's unwillingness to supply Czechoslovakia with an already paid-for tin rolling mill to the value of USD 16,000,000. The rejection of the Marshall Plan and the coup-d'état in Prague also limited mutual relations in the economic sphere. The rejection of the Marshall Plan, enforced by Moscow, was all the more serious in that it occurred during a time when the Czechoslovak economy was beginning to suffer difficulties and crisis phenomena. UNRRA supplies were coming to an end and Soviet allies

21 Národní archiv (NA) Praha, fond MZV-VA 1945–1951, cart. no. 493, *Daily News*, October 18, 1946.

22 Slavomír Michálek, *Nádeje a vytriezvenia, československo-americké hospodárske vzťahy v rokoch 1945-1951* (Bratislava: Veda, 1995), 26–82.

23 Ibid.

were not able to provide substantial financial or material aid for an economic kick-start (besides the supply of cereals to counterbalance the consequences of the drought). At the same time, the loss of previous markets and qualified employees only multiplied the need for foreign economic aid such as that provided by the Marshall Plan.

In January 1947, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Masaryk, characterized Czechoslovakia's position: "Our political situation? Very simple. A loyal ally of Soviet Russia. We've always loved Russia. We're Slavs—and proud to be. But we don't see any reason to change anything about our attitude towards the west. We need your help ... Iron Curtain? I know nothing of the Iron Curtain, in a word - nothing at all."[24] In answer to the question of American journalists as to whether the CSR was a bridge between the East and the west, Masaryk responded: "A bridge has that disadvantage that sooner or later horses will start galloping along it and they'll always leave something behind."[25]

It is also useful to look at the question of how London's ideas concerning post-war arrangements were developing, in particular given the fact that Churchill's anti-communist thinking was part of his plans for the post-war arrangement of Europe and the world. Winston Churchill strove, not only for the preservation of the British Empire but also for a power balance based on the alliance of Great Britain, France, and the USA against the USSR. On March 5, 1946, Churchill gave a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, which period analysts assessed as a 'waking up' from illusions about Soviet policy, although, as was widely known, Churchill had personally never suffered from such illusions. In his famous and oft-quoted words: from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent he merely openly defined the real state of European politics, encouraging Anglo-Saxons to unite in the face of a new totalitarian threat from Moscow that only worshiped force. American President

24 NA Praha, fond MZV-VA 1945–51, cart. no. 493, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 14 January 1947.

25 NA Praha, fond MZV-VA 1945–51, cart. no. 491.

Harry Truman, who did not want a confrontation with Stalin and who maintained a policy of a balance between the superpowers, refused to comment on Churchill's speech. As an interesting point we provide here Churchill's notion of the delimitation of the spheres of influence between the USSR and Great Britain in the Balkans: in Romania (USSR 90 %, other Allies 10 %), in Greece (Great Britain 90 %, other Allies 10 %), in Yugoslavia (USSR 50 %, other Allies 50 %), in Hungary (USSR 50 %, other Allies 50 %), and in Bulgaria (USSR 75 %, other Allies 25 %). These notions formed the core of a proposal of an informal treaty between both parties in October 1944, by which Churchill attempted to gain the greatest influence possible in the Balkans to the benefit of Great Britain.[26] This treaty did not mention Czechoslovakia.

Understandably, on the political chessboard of the post-war world, Moscow too observed its own superpower interests. Through the results of World War II, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin wanted to first and foremost establish expedient strategic borders for the USSR by the creation of a buffer zone in the west and south-west made up of the states of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In Asia, Stalin strove to secure his influence in Iran and acquire territorial gains in the Far East to the detriment of Japan. With regard to Soviet interests, in April 1945 Stalin expressed himself to the Yugoslavian politician, Milovan Djilas, in these terms: "This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise."[27] In this informal conversation, Stalin outlined the perspective of his intentions in the long-term, rather than his immediate post-war goals. Stalin's conversations with important representatives and politicians about Soviet intentions in Central-Eastern Europe in the years 1944-1945 are not his real plans; their content differs depending on who he was talking to, on what occasion, and the possibility of the use of the conversation for prop-

26 Vladimír Nálevka, *Kapitoly z dějin studené války,* Díl první (Praha: Institut pro Středoevropskou kulturu a politiku, 1997), 15.

27 Henry Kissinger, *Uměni diplomacie. Od Richelieua k pádu Berlínské zdi* (Praha: Prostor, 1996), 428.

aganda purposes. Stalin said different things to Djilas and Josip Broz Tito, and he said other things to Stanisław Orlemański and Stanisław Mikołajczyk. With the communists, Djilas and Tito, he made no secret of his interest in establishing a communist regime in Yugoslavia, but to Orlemański and Mikołajczyk he denied the appropriateness of a communist regime and Soviet interference in Poland.[28] Stalin was interested in the preservation of the alliance with the USA, especially for economic reasons, with the aim of gaining aid from the USA for the quick reconstruction of the country destroyed by war. It is necessary to analyze the notion of Soviet expansionism as one of the causes of the Cold War that broke out later, in more detail, especially from the viewpoint of Soviet interests in Central-Eastern Europe; inter alia, from the aspect of the concept of a sphere of influence in the years 1945-1947, and later, when the Soviet bloc was formed. Currently "it cannot be confirmed that the Soviet policy in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was progressing ahead according to a plan created beforehand, from which communism ensued in the form in which we knew it in its later existence."[29] At the end of the war, Stalin did not elaborate a detailed programme, but rather an idea of his intentions in Central-Eastern Europe. His policy had an improvized character.[30] An important factor which cannot be overlooked was Stalin's effort to nurture the communist parties in the region and promote Soviet intentions through them. The Soviet leadership thus very carefully observed the situation in the individual communist parties. It gathered information from several channels and evaluated it. In 1946, Stalin expressed himself several times with regard to the support of the so-called national roads to socialism, without copying the Soviet model. Klement Gottwald, too, relied on his words, speaking of the Czechoslovak road to socialism. So did Władysław Gomułka

28 Yurij L. Gibiansky, Problemy Vostochnoy Yevropy, 123–124. Orlemański was a priest of Polish origin living in the USA.

29 Jiří Vykoukal – Bohuslav Litera – Miroslav Tejchman, *Východ. Vznik, vývoj a rozpad sovětského bloku 1944-1989* (Praha: Libri, 2000), 96. Vojtech Mastný rrived at a similar conclusion In *Studená válka a sovětský pocit nejistoty. Stalinova léta 1947-1953* (Praha: Aurora, 2001), 19–40.

30 Yurij L. Gibiansky, Problemy Vostochnoy Yevropy, 121–125.

about the Polish road to socialism respecting the development of the workers' movement in Poland. At the same time, Stalin had different intentions in mind when he spoke about specific roads to socialism with British Labourites.

In relation to Soviet interests and notions of post-war development, we have to remark that the disputes between the USA and the USSR were not clearly shaped, as yet, in the years 1945-1946. In relation to Central-Eastern Europe, this was also because the USA did not show an interest in exercising control over this region. At that time, both of the superpowers still shared the same opinion that, in their sphere of influence, they were to have control over foreign and defence policy but other areas were within the competence of the state itself. In practice, this meant that the superpowers would not force their own model of political system and regime on the economic, social, and cultural activities of a particular country. This perception of spheres was similar to the United States' 19th-century Monroe Doctrine, by which the USA had applied its influence over Latin America. According to certain sources, this understanding of the spheres of influence had adherents in both the USA (Walter Lippmann) and in the USSR in the person of the former Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim M. Litvinov. At the end of the war, Litvinov headed a committee which prepared documents on Soviet notions of the spheres of influence and the country's security zone. "The maximum zone of security", according to the projects of this committee, was to include not only the territories of the USSR's western neighbours, but also Sweden, Norway, and Turkey. Moreover, it calculated a Soviet presence in northern Iran, internationalization of the Kiel Canal in Germany, and a mandate over some former Italian colonies.[31] Litvinov grounded his notions on the assumption that the USA would focus on its traditional sphere of influence after the war. That is, the countries of the American continent and part of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. He considered Europe to be within the British and Soviet spheres of influ-

31 Vladimir O. Pechatnov, Ot soyuza k vrazhde. Sovetsko-amerikanskiye otnoshenia 1945-1946 gg. In *Kholodnaya voyna 1945-1953* (Moskva: Olma-Press, 2003), 31.

ence. Besides the Slavic countries of the Balkan Peninsula, he recommended including Turkey and Nordic countries as well, in addition to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania, within the Soviet sphere of influence. After the treaty with the British, Litvinov also included Austria and Italy into this buffer zone.[32] Thus, Czechoslovakia did not enter Litvinov's proposal independently.[33]

The Soviet diplomat, Ivan M. Maisky, also outlined an idea of optimum post-war development in a January 1944 treatise for the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav M. Molotov. Maisky's vision is interesting and important for several reasons: because it contained the priorities of Soviet interests in Europe, Asia, and the rest of the world, with a particular outline of post-war policy and relations with individual countries of the world. According to this document[34], the USSR's main concern was to guarantee its security and the preservation of peace in Europe and Asia for a minimum of 30-50 years. This period would suffice for the USSR to become a powerful country capable of repelling aggression. If necessary, continental Europe could possibly become socialist provided that a war did not occur in this part of the world.

In Maisky's opinion, the USSR's chief intention would be to gain advantageous strategic borders after the war, considering the joint border with the CSR as a portion of which. From the viewpoint of Soviet interests, he viewed the creation of any federations within Europe as unacceptable, by which he reacted to various deliberations and projects prepared by exile governments in London. Even if Milan Hodža's project of a federation in Central Europe is not mentioned in this document, from its content it follows that it would not have received support. At the time of the creation of this

32 Karel Durman, *Popely ješte žhavé...*, 102.

33 Ibid.

34 Zapiska rukovoditelya Komisii Narodnogo Komissariata inostrannych del (NKID) SSSR po vozmeshcheniu ushcherba, nanesennogo Sovetskomu Soyuzu gitlerovskoy Germaniyey i yeyo soyuznikami I. Maiskogo narodnomu komissaru inostrannych del V. M. Molotovu po voprosam budushchego mira i poslevoyennogo ustroystva. In *Sovetskiy faktor v Vostochnoy Yevrope.* Tom I., (Moskva, 2002), 23–45.

document, the notion was prevalent that the USA would not keep its army on the European continent after the end of the war: that it would withdraw in the same way as it had done after World War I. The USSR would thus be the only superpower on the European continent, with the strongest ground force.

In Maisky's words, the USSR was particularly interested in US and UK economic aid. It was these countries that were to help the USSR overcome the war's consequences, via the supply of goods and loans over the course of 5-10 years. In Maisky's opinion, the USA would emerge from the war strengthened and it would strive for financial and economic expansion in Europe. But with the accession of Republicans to power, he believed that US policy would differ from Franklin D. Roosevelt's policy. In the post-war period it would be more confrontational or even cynical.

From Maisky's viewpoint, the transformation of Europe into a socialist region was not a primary Soviet interest. He considered proletarian revolutions in Europe to be an obstacle in the creation of wide coalitions formed on the principle of national fronts. He did not rule out the creation of a socialist Europe either, but only after the passing of 30-50 years. In Maisky's treatise about post-war arrangements, the notions of a post-war CSR, which had to be: "strengthened territorially, politically and economically. It should be the bastion of our influence in Central and South-Eastern Europe."[35] were important. This opinion regarding a powerful CSR relied on the favourable political mood of its inhabitants towards the USSR (probably Russophilia), and the existence of the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of December 1943.

Maisky's prognoses about the securing of peace for a period of 30-50 years did not come to be wholly fulfilled, because within 2-3 years relations between the superpowers acquired a hostile form and Europe was divided into bipolar camps. Litvinov did not see his predictions realized either. The first symptoms of disagreement could be observed already in relation to the first assembly of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the victorious Allies in Septem-

35 Ibid., 45.

ber 1945 in London. This meeting dealt with the preparation of peace treaties with the satellites of Nazi Germany and, due to differing opinions, it ended in failure. Post-war development did not progress according to Maisky's predictions in other areas either. In the first years after the war, the Soviet leadership interfered with the internal development of Czechoslovakia only sporadically. The situation changed in July 1947 when the Soviet leadership prevented Czechoslovakia from accepting the Marshall Plan. In the interests of the support of the seizure of power by the Soviet communist party, it thoroughly observed the situation and development in the Czechoslovak communist party and the communists' positions within the army. A different approach was used by the Soviet leadership in relation to Poland, Romania, and Hungary, where there were greater interferences with internal development.

The allied states in the war, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland, concluded alliance treaties of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and between themselves during the war or shortly afterwards. After the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty was signed (December 12, 1943), the USSR concluded similar treaties with Yugoslavia and Poland (April 1945). In the years 1946-1947, alliance treaties were forged by Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland between themselves (March 1947). These treaties, the mutual ones and those with the USSR, were to ensure protection from possible German aggression. The Soviet Union meticulously inspected and intervened in the negotiations on the alliance treaties concluded between the small states of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. By means of these treaties, individual states were pulled into a bloc constellation headed by the USSR. The Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty of November 23, 1945, on the supply of uranium ore to the Soviet Union, also had a bloc character; the USSR controlled mining through its specialists. Czechoslovak uranium was an important raw material for the production of the Soviet atomic bomb. According to the 1945 treaty, and later specifications, the USSR was the only importer of Czechoslovak uranium ore.

Following the signing of peace treaties with formerly defeated countries—Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania—another round of al-

liance treaty signings followed. These were, first, with the Soviet Union, and subsequently with the former allied states, as well as between each other. From November 1947 to July 1948, ten out of 12 alliance treaties were signed. The alliance treaty of Czechoslovakia with Hungary was signed at the beginning of 1949, as was the treaty between Albania and Bulgaria. These treaties contained regulations on "consultations" of the people's democratic order states with the Soviet Union on their steps in relation to international issues. The obligation of these "consultations" was first violated by Yugoslavia in relation to their treaty with Bulgaria and Georgi Dimitrov's declaration of the Balkan Federation. Even after a trilateral meeting with Stalin, in the presence of Bulgaria's Kostov and Kolarov and Yugoslavia's Djilas and Kardelj, held in Moscow on February 10, 1948, Yugoslavia's leadership took further independent steps without "consultation" with the USSR. This became the main source of a fermenting conflict, which had been kept secret from the public until June 1948. Later, it escalated to the level of threatening war.

The disintegration of the anti-Hitler coalition from the time of World War II and the transformation of the Soviet sphere of influence in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe into a Soviet bloc also fundamentally impacted relations between the coalition partners of the political parties associated in national or patriotic fronts. Their cooperation in 1945-1946 was not without conflicts and disputes and it acquired a sharply confrontational form of criminalizing the leaders of the non-communist parties which, in the first post-war elections, had enjoyed the great support of the electorate and which were in opposition to the communist party.

A comparison of the steps taken by the communist parties against other parties in some countries of Central-Eastern Europe reveals several common features. The first was the support and creation of opposition groups, the so-called leftist wings within non-communist parties. Such a process was undertaken within the social-democratic parties of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia. Their disintegration resulted in the merger of social-democratic parties with communist parties, thus resulting in the social democratic par-

ties losing their identity. A more complicated situation arose in the communists' strategy against those civil parties in which they had not managed to form opposition groups, attempting to "disintegrate" them from the inside. This was the case with the Smallholders' Party of Béla Kovács in Hungary, the National Liberal Party of Romania headed by Gheorghe Tătărescu, Nikola Petkov's Agrarian National Union in Bulgaria, and the Democratic Party in Slovakia. In all of these parties "counter state conspiracies were revealed" in 1947. In Hungary, the military authorities arrested Kovács, who was accused of preparing a conspiracy of "Horthy forces against the republic". Similar features were possessed by the campaign against the Agrarian National Union of Bulgaria. The leader of this party, Nikola Petkov, was sentenced to capital punishment in August 1947 for organising a military plot against the government of the Fatherland Front with the help of "Anglo-American imperialists". After Petkov's sentencing, his party was banned. In autumn 1947, a "counter state plot" was allegedly discovered in the National Liberal Party of Romania under Tătărescu, followed by his expulsion from the government and the declaration of Romania as a people's republic. In autumn 1947, a "counter state conspiracy in Slovakia" allegedly originated, with the leading representatives of the Democratic Party in Slovakia accused of its preparation. The treatment of this crisis was a kind of dress rehearsal before the all-state trial of strength in February 1948, whereby the communists carried out a coup-d'état and established the monopoly of power of the communist party. A similar development failed to take place: of disintegration of social democracy in Finland. Hence, a Finnish "February 1948 à la Czechoslovakia" did not happen. "Finlandisation" meant the independent development of internal politics without Finland's inclusion within the Soviet bloc, despite Soviet support in their foreign relations.

The idea of liquidating social-democratic and civil parties through their internal disintegration—"through revealing of counter state plots" and the criminalization of their leaders—was probably born in Moscow at the beginning or middle of 1947 when the Soviet bloc was in formation. Such methods found a positive re-

sponse in the leaderships of Central-Eastern Europe's communist parties, because it offered a manual as well as a blessing for the ruthless and savage methods of elimination of strong parties opposed to the communists.

The fabrication of "counter state conspiracies" succeeded in those states where the communist parties influenced public opinion by organizing "movements" from the bottom up, making social demands and calling for the purification of public life. The "plots" were an important symptom of the disintegration of the alliance of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition and clear indicators of the emergence of the Cold War. The exchange of power elites through postwar purges and administrative measures strengthened the position of the communist parties, which after establishing a monopoly of power were the only source of new cadres. By 1947, the communist parties basically held a monopoly of power in all of the countries of Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, with the exception of Czechoslovakia.

The Sovietization of Central-Eastern Europe, and the creation of regimes following the Soviet pattern, came about (except in Albania and Yugoslavia) together with the foundation of the communist parties' Cominform. With Cominform's establishment, slogans speaking to the national and specific roads of the people's democracies towards socialism lost their currency and the communists focused solely on gaining a monopoly of power.

2. The San Francisco Conference—Czechoslovakia and the Foundation of the UN

The United Nations conference in San Francisco commenced on April 25, 1945. Later historical documents refer to the conference via the abbreviation UNCIO (the United Nations Conference on International Organization). It was preceded on August 20, 1944 by trilateral US-Soviet-British talks at Washington's Dumbarton Oaks estate, at which China would replace the Soviet Union at the end of September. In San Francisco, participating nations together laid the foundations of a new international organization for collective security. In an atmosphere of euphoria, the American press labelled San

Francisco as the capital of humanity's future, figuratively emphasizing the historic importance of the mission of the conference. The local municipal council offered delegates use of the buildings of the War Memorial Opera House and the War Memorial Veterans Auditorium, both in the city centre. The solemn conference opening was held in the Opera building in the presence of 283 delegates representing 50 countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Commonwealth of the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, USSR, United Kingdom, USA, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia), around 600 of their advisors, 1,200 honourable guests, and 1,500 journalists. After the opening of the conference by the US Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, President Harry Truman gave a telephone speech, speaking directly from the White House. He paid homage to Roosevelt's memory and invited all the participants to learn to live together in peace.

From the beginning, the conference operated on two fundamental levels, the political and "specialist". The most important undertaking was to focus on the creation of the new institution's international mechanisms and avoid talks on particular political and economic issues, such as The Soviet Union's intentions in Europe and Asia, the treatment of Germany, or the post-war arrangement. However, the conference could not shake off a political undertone. The mutual mixing of political and specialist interests emerged in its first days. A conflict around the acceptance of Argentina revealed the determination of the USA and Latin American nations to introduce a new reciprocity within the western hemisphere, even under the possible threat that it might appear to be an acceptance of the fascist government in Buenos Aires and lead to the alienation of the USSR. Referring to which, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, remarked that it was not necessary to

reach a decision by "rushing into the fire". Political issues came to the foreground again when the delegations of Syria and Lebanon, which were supported by other members of the Arab League (established in Cairo in March 1945, its members were Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Yemen; the first five of which were represented at the San Francisco Conference), strongly defied French pressure. And whereas the conference was opened with what many considered to be an appeasing gesture towards Argentinian fascism, it was concluded by the adoption of a proposal introduced by Mexico, that every country whose government had been supported by the Axis—a transparent allusion to Franco's regime in Spain—would be excluded from the UN.

The most notable tendency which, for a certain time, threatened to cause the greatest problems in San Francisco, as well as in the capitals of Europe, was the initially critical attitude towards the Soviet Union. The issue of the USSR's future relations with the other 47 member countries was a topic of both official and unofficial negotiations. It was assumed that the important issues between members of the Big Three had been previously resolved in Yalta in February. But the San Francisco Conference opened two months later in an atmosphere of renewed suspicion concerning Soviet demands in Europe and Asia. The end of the war in Europe was partly the cause for this. The defeat of Germany meant that many with anti-Soviet attitudes that had been kept in check during the war felt, as Soviet military aid was no longer needed, that the time had come to limit Soviet expansionism on the European continent; or, as was often remarked in San Francisco, that the Allies take a "more hard-line" policy towards the USSR.[36]

Demand for a harsher, or hard-line, policy was strengthened by the standstill in Moscow in the execution of the Yalta resolution on the creation of a new Polish government. This standstill led several politicians who had previously shown a friendly attitude to Moscow to demonstrate desperation regarding the possibility of ever coming to an agreement with the Kremlin again. It is also true

36 Slavomír Michálek, *San Francisco 1945...*, 53 et seq.

that the Soviets did little to diminish the tension which had developed between them and their western allies. At the beginning of the conference, they continued taking unilateral steps in Europe, such as unilaterally recognising Renner's government in Austria without previous talks with the USA and Great Britain, and reporting on the arrest of six Poles, among whom were secret agents of the Polish government-in-exile who had been sent to negotiate with the Soviet Union. In the meantime, the possibility that with the end of war in Europe, the USSR, which on April 5 had withdrawn from the Neutrality Pact with Japan, may become actively involved in the Asian war, started to appear in the minds of some delegates, who feared that the Soviet Union would make territorial demands to the detriment of China.

As the conference continued, the compromises of daily negotiations contributed a great deal to diminishing fear and suspicion on both sides which had darkened the introductory meetings. The west understood better than in the past the immediate nature of the Soviet interest in a warranty against the renewal of German aggression. As far as the Soviets were concerned, they could now observe first-hand how their abrupt unilateral steps affected other countries; even those most eager to be friends with the USSR gradually acquired the impression that other countries were determined to create an effective system of collective security with them and not against them, as Moscow had often feared. The initial tension between the USSR and other superpowers was caused by differences in opinion concerning the kind of world security that the conference was supposed to ensure by means of the newly-formed world organization. In his introductory speech at the conference, as well as in his speech to Congress on April 16, 2017, President Truman emphasized the superpowers' responsibility to abstain from the use of military force, except in the case of the protection of law. He emphasized that the superpowers had to serve small countries, not control them. They had to be "good neighbours". On behalf of China, which had become a voice for smaller countries in their peace demands, that would be based on justice not on peace alone, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, T. V. Soong requested the

introduction of a world order which would be based on respect of law. The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, expressed the opinion of delegates present when he declared that the superpowers could contribute twofold: by supporting the international organization and by creating norms of international behaviour and observing them in relation to other countries. On the other hand, Molotov emphasized the international organization's effective authority over its responsibility. He spoke on the impotence of the League of Nations in preventing World War II and on the need of entrusting an appropriate military force to the new organization that could be immediately used against an aggressor. Arguments about the rights of small countries or the supreme equality of all people, he said, should not be a reason for undermining the mechanism which had been proposed at Dumbarton Oaks. At one of his press conferences, Molotov repeated the Soviet belief that the superpowers, which had by then borne the brunt of war, should be those that would lead the world into the post-war period. The Kremlin's emphasis on the need for effective military action which would be supported, in particular by the superpowers, explained his insistence on the strict interpretation of the veto power of the Big Five within the Security Council.

Moscow was fully aware of the cooling attitudes of Washington and London and, in San Francisco, the Soviets had a particularly powerful impression of the unified front proposed by the USA and Latin American countries. Molotov requested a short postponement on April 30 in order to think over the proposal of Argentina's acceptance. At the Kremlin it was well understood that the countries of Latin America, with their 20 votes, if grouped with the USA, Philippines, and Liberia, plus the five Arab states which had just created a regional union and shown a great interest in a Pan-American Union, would always hold the majority in the organization's General Assembly. This majority would hardly be supportive of the USSR. Even if the representatives from Latin America energetically declared that in no case would they always vote as a coalition, the Soviet assumption did not seem wholly unjustified, given the anti-communist feeling based on the fear of social change presented in